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Joe Bustillos

November 1, 1990

Political Editorial: If Prop 136 passes, a simple "Yes" might not be good enough.

Thesis: One might wonder, given California's apathetic voting record, whether it would be wiser to produce an energetic informed electorate before we decide to give it the responsibility of paying the government's bills.

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Political Editorial: If Prop 136 passes, a simple "Yes" might not be good enough.

To vote: "Voices numbered, but not weighed" Francis Bacon.

Political science and sociology journals abound with articles examining the shrinking of America's voting population. Political scientist Richard Rose writes, "the turnout of voters in the American presidential election---the most widely publicized free election in the Western world---is far below the level of participation in almost any other Western country." This finding certainly is not limited to presidential elections. Primaries, state and local elections have all suffered the same down turn according to political scientist Howard L. Reiter.

To vote: "The instrument and symbol of a freeman's power to make a fool of himself and wreck of his country" Ambrose Bierce.

Such being the current state of American voting practices, one wonders whether California can afford Proposition 136.

This state/local taxation initiative, called the "taxpayer's right to vote" amendment by its backers, would require any state special taxes enacted through the initiative process be approved by two-thirds of the voters, instead of the current majority vote. It would also require majority voter approval for any imposition of new or higher general taxes by city governments, instead of a simple council vote. ["General taxes" are defined as taxes levied for the General Fund to used for general governmental purposes; "special taxes" are defined as taxes

levied for a specific purpose or deposited in a fund other than the General Fund.]

California's legislative analyst notes that passage of 136 could limit future passage of initiative measures and limit the ability of the state to raise revenues in the future. Ah ha, that is exactly what the initiative writers intended, one might think. How could that be bad? It appears to give the voters direct say in how taxes are enacted. Take it out of the hands of the bureaucrats in Sacramento. Let the people decide.

Not a bad idea until one realizes that it might overturn a "Yes" vote on propositions 128 "Big Green," 130 "Save the Trees," 134 "Nickel-a-drink," 135 "Pesticide regulation" or any of the other measures. Opponents to 136 go so far as to connect the proposition's backers with liquor industry money.

Conspiracy theories aside, one might wonder, given California's apathetic voting record, whether it would be wiser to produce an energetic informed electorate before we decide to give it the responsibility of paying the government's bills.

To vote: "Picking the lesser of evils" Anonymous

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*you really need to sort these out and explain just that*